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UNCLAS SAN JOSE 000270

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CS](#)

SUBJECT: ARIAS'S LEAD DECLINING IN FINAL DAYS BEFORE
ELECTION

REF: A. SAN JOSE 227

[1](#)B. SAN JOSE 193

Summary

[1](#)1. Three different polls conducted in the last days of January show that the gap in support between presidential frontrunner Oscar Arias and his principal rival Otton Solis is narrowing. The spread between the two is still 11 percentage points or more, but the possibility of a runoff election (if Arias gets less than 40 percent of the vote) is no longer out of the question. End summary.

Unimer Poll

[1](#)2. Unimer Research International conducted a countrywide poll from January 27 to 31 that shows centrist presidential candidate Oscar Arias with the support of 42.6 percent of probable voters, leftist Otton Solis with 31.5 percent, and rightist Otto Guevara with 12.9 percent. The result is a dramatic change from Unimer's January 15-23 poll (ref A) which gave Arias 49.6 percent, Solis 25.4 percent, and Guevara 11.8 percent. Unimer conducted 1,200 in-person interviews, and the margin of error is 2.8 percent.

Demoscopia Poll

[1](#)3. Demoscopia also conducted a countrywide poll from January 27 to 31 and found the same tendency, with a 2.2 percent margin of error. In just over a week (see ref B for earlier poll), according to Demoscopia, Arias's support dropped from 45.5 percent to 43 percent, while Solis rose from 24.1 to 26 percent, and Guevara from 15 to 15.9 percent. The same poll showed Guevara's Libertarian Movement (ML) doing better in the legislative race than previously forecast, i.e., scoring 11 members of the 57-member Legislative Assembly instead of just 8.

CID-Gallup Poll

[1](#)4. CID-Gallup's January 28-29 poll results, with a margin of error of 2.8 percent, confirms the same broad tendency of strengthened support for Solis found in the Unimer and Demoscopia polls. Compared to CID-Gallup's January 20-24 poll (ref B), Arias also slightly increased his support from 46 to 47 percent but Solis showed a significant jump from 21 to 28 percent. Guevara's support went down from 15 to 13 percent.

Comment

[1](#)5. It is difficult to explain Solis's surge and Arias's apparent decline. Both sides continue to campaign hard and to advertise heavily. But while Arias's ads have been constant over time, Solis's ads in all the media have picked up a lot in the last week. Arias's campaign focuses on his experience and vision for Costa Rica, while Solis attacks Arias unmercifully for being a "voice of hatred and lies" about Solis. It could be that Solis's far more aggressive tactics are working.

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